Key Qualities Required in a Standard Good and Excellent Lesson Plan

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Below are the qualities that make a lesson plan either Good or Excellent. They are organized in chronological order, except for qualities that exist throughout the lesson. Any quality in **Blue** are qualities that Good and Excellent lesson plans have. Any quality in **Red** are qualities that only Excellent lesson plans have.

Agenda

- **Description:** The agenda will include what the students will be covering in the lesson such as homework reviews, learning goals, and activities. The agenda does not need to be heavy in details. It should be kept short with only about 3-4 different tasks.
- **Justification:** Having an agenda on the board will provide students with structure and inform them of what's to come in the lesson. It will remove any surprises and put students at ease so they know what to expect in the lesson.

Relevance to Real Life Applications

- **Description:** When teaching any mathematical concept, the educator needs to make the connection to examples that students can relate to.
- **Justification:** In ARCS Model of Motivational Design, John Keller explains that we need to make the content relevant to the learner. Students are more inclined to learn if the teacher can build on prior knowledge and if they can apply the topic to their everyday life. To do this, the teacher can create application questions that spark student interests. This could be as simple as using their names in the question. Teachers can also show students how different concepts are used in different fields. This might spark an interest for future student goals.

Assessment

- **Description:** Teachers need to incorporate day to day assessments in their lessons. This can be through a brief quiz, small group activity, or even together as a class.
- **Justification:** Rick Stiggins discusses the importance of assessment in the article, "Through the Students Eyes." He mentions that assessments should be used on a day to day basis to enhance student learning. Through this, a teacher will be able to gather information about the learning needs of each student and guide them to success for future evaluations. Assessments will also provide an opportunity to fill in gaps of misunderstanding. They are used to improve student learning.

Higher Order Questions

- **Description:** Teachers need to develop higher order thinking questions that will have students apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information throughout the lesson. Teachers can use these questions to draw out information from their students and check to see if students are understanding concepts.

- **Justification:** When teachers ask such questions, students will be required to do higher order thinking. In this process, students will learn and discover different dimensions to a concept. This information will be stored in long term memory and ideas will be clearer to remember; rather than memorization. With a better understanding, students will be able to recall and apply their knowledge to different situations. Bloom's Taxonomy is a good starting point for developing higher order questions. http://tinyurl.com/teachhigherorderthinking

Consolidation

- **Description**: After learning new material, teachers need to incorporate an activity at the end of the lesson to recap new concepts covered in the class. There are several ways a teacher can wrap up the main ideas from a lesson. The consolidation can be about 5-15 minutes, depending on the complexity and time of the class. http://tinyurl.com/kay-consolidation
- **Justification:** At the end of a lesson, it is important for students to have the chance to reflect on what they have learned, what it means to them, and how they can use it in the future. Consolidations allow students to summarize what they have learned, make personal responses, ask additional questions, etc. It is important that students have an opportunity to store new knowledge in their long term memory.

Review Homework

- **Description**: The first fifteen minutes of the class should be used to go over at least three of the most common, challenging problems that students had from the homework.
- **Justification:** Assigning homework to students will allow them to develop and strengthen their understanding of a concept. However, if students are unable to successfully complete any questions, this could lead to difficulties in future lessons. Going over homework questions is a form of assessment *for* learning. The Growing Success document states coaching students for improvement will lead to future success.

Hook/Minds-On Activity

- **Description:** An engaging activity introduce the lesson to the students to peak their interest. The activity can be interactive, and could potentially involve group involvement.
- **Justification:** Student engagement is dependent on their motivation to the lesson; if they aren't intrigued by the material or do not see relevance for future use, students will not learn the material as well (if at all). In the ARCS Model of Motivation Design, attention can be gained either through perceptual arousal or inquiry arousal. A well thought-out Hook/Minds-On can achieve that goal.

Teacher's Knowledge of the Material

- **Description:** The teacher's mastery/knowledge of the material being taught during the lesson.
- **Justification:** A teacher who is knowledgeable in their subject area will be passionate when presenting different concepts to the teachers. There is also a level of comfortability with the material that should exist. They will also be able to develop good questions for

the students to draw out knowledge. Teachers who are uncomfortable with the content will lead to students to follow suit as the students are dependant on learning the content through the teacher, and (at best) reflect the teacher's feelings of the content. This relates to Behaviour Learning Theory.

Use of Technology

- **Description:** The incorporation of technology (SMART technology, computers, web-based mathematical tools, graphing calculators, etc.) into the lesson to help assist students understand topics in a different way.
- **Justification:** Stems straight from Experiential Learning, we learn through doing, not just hearing/looking. Having technology in the classroom can help fortify the lesson by offering methods where they can "play around" with the material (through interactive gadgets or programs), and develop patterns through what they're doing.

Challenging Problems:

- **Description:** The use of challenging, thought-provoking problems to help bring out higher-order thinking.
- **Justification:** Problem-Based Learning asks for students to apply their knowledge to new situations; situations that are opened-ended and challenging. Aside from working on their problem-solving skills, it helps develop critical thinking skills, along with the motivation to continue challenging themselves. The goal is to learn, not fill. Problems that require them to think out of the box will only strengthen their mind.

Building Rapport w/ Students

- **Description:** The teacher's ability to display their personality through interaction and/or presentation of the material in an engaging manner.
- **Justification:** Another way to motivate students to learn is through building rapport - a feeling of sympathetic understanding which will lead to trust between individuals (in this case, between student and teacher). If the material you present is dull and doesn't appeal to the student, they won't care to learn it. Creating more engaging presentations, along with showing your personality and breaking divisions between teacher/student stigmas, will strengthen the bond of the classroom and create a more welcoming environment for them to learn in.